



# Joe Sanfelippo

## *Milwaukee County Supervisor - 17th District*



August 2011



**MILWAUKEE COUNTY  
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

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**COMMITTEE**

**ASSIGNMENTS:**

Personnel, Chair  
Intergovernmental  
Relations

Parks, Energy,  
and Environment



**Dear Friends and Constituents,**

Welcome to August!

I hope you are enjoying your summer so far. In a few days, State Fair will begin and my mouth is watering just thinking about those delicious cream puffs. I can't help but feel a little sad realizing that summer is nearly over. Soon after State Fair ends, attention will turn to getting ready for the kids to go back to school.

Here at the County Board, as in most governmental bodies, August is a recess month. While there are no committee meetings or a regular County Board meeting, work continues behind the scenes as we prepare for the 2012 Budget.

I am hopeful that, during this month, we will put the finishing touches on our final report from the New Behavioral Health Facility Study Committee. The committee has been working diligently investigating the options available to the County as we move toward improving the delivery of mental healthcare and deciding on the future of the current facility.

I am also working on several resolutions that I plan to introduce this fall. The ideas are intended to help the County work through a projected \$50+ million deficit for 2012, strengthen employee work rules and protections in the wake of the changes brought on by the State's Budget Repair Bill and make the County Board more affordable, accessible and accountable to you, the taxpayers.

As always, I appreciate that you read my newsletter and take the time to offer comments and suggestions.

### **Final Redistricting Plan Approved**

At its July meeting, the County Board approved a final redistricting plan that will be in place for the next decade. The new plan calls for 18 supervisory districts, which is a downsizing of just one seat. I have several concerns with this plan.

First, a lawsuit has been filed against the County Board questioning whether proper public notice was given back in April when the plan was tentatively approved. If that litigation is successful, the final plan could be rendered null and void.

Second, State Statutes clearly outline the process that the County must follow when adopting a final plan. One of the rules is that the County must not approve a final plan until all the local municipalities have passed resolutions adopting their own ward lines and have forwarded those adopted plans to the county. The County Board chose to ignore state law by adopting a plan before this requirement was met.

Next, the final plan adopted by the Board eliminated District 6 despite overwhelming public opposition from north shore residents who did not want to see the Whitefish Bay community divided into two different supervisory districts. Further making this move bewildering is the fact that District 6 has seen a nearly 5% growth in population since the last census while nearby District 5, which had

an 11% population decrease, was left intact.

Over the past decade, there has been a huge population shift to the southeastern portion of the County. This shift necessitated a significant redrawing of the current supervisory districts to account for the decrease in population from the northern end of the County to balance the population. But, why was District 6, which had population growth, eliminated while District 5, which lost 11% of its population left alone? Common sense dictates that the district chosen for elimination would be the one with the 11% decrease. Unfortunately, common sense did not prevail in this case.

Finally, while there has been much talk over the last few years of the need for a larger downsizing of the Board, only 1 seat was eliminated.

There is still time for County Executive Abele to step in and veto the final plan. Just a few months ago, while running for the County's top job, candidate Abele campaigned on the idea that a substantial downsizing of the Board was a good idea. He passed on his first opportunity to fulfill this pledge by refusing to veto the preliminary plan. I am hopeful that he will take the opportunity to make good on his word and issue a veto this time around.



### **Domestic Partnership Benefits**

Also at the July meeting, the Board approved a resolution to extend health benefits to domestic partners of County employees. I did not support this proposal because we simply cannot afford it.

The County is facing a \$50+ million budget deficit for 2012. In order to close this deficit, we will have to make tough decisions on things like raising transit fares and cutting bus routes. It does not make sense to spend money on new benefits when we cannot afford to provide existing services to County residents.

Furthermore, we are sending mixed signals to our employees. The week this idea was introduced, County Executive Abele told the Journal Sentinel that we may have to consider pay cuts and layoffs to close the looming budget gap. Then, two days later, an announcement was made that we are going to extend benefits to people who do not even work for the County.

The supporters of this proposal claim this move was necessary simply out of fairness. But how fair is it to tell some employees they may have their pay cut or even lose their jobs while we tell other employees we are going to pay for benefits for their domestic partners?

Knowing that this resolution had enough support to pass, I introduced a motion to lay the proposal over to be considered

during the budget cycle. Since the new benefits are not scheduled to begin until 2012, there would have been no harm done in taking extra time to explore further how much extending these benefits will cost. Then we could decide whether this money should be spent on extending benefits or for saving other County services or jobs. Unfortunately, my motion failed twice and the proposal was passed.

When a similar proposal passed the Board in 2009, then-County Executive Walker vetoed it and there was enough opposition from Board members to uphold that veto. Unfortunately, this time around, County Executive Abele has said he will sign it.

We are in a budget crunch and must prioritize our spending. When the decision comes down to laying off employees and cutting bus routes and other county services or extending health insurance to domestic partners, I will support the employees, bus routes and County services first.

**I will host my fall Public Hearings in October to discuss the 2012 County budget and district issues. There will be a meeting in each municipality I represent, including Greendale, Greenfield and West Allis. Please stay tuned to future E-Newsletters once the dates are finalized. I encourage you to attend.**



### **Milwaukee Air & Water Show**

Saturday, August 6 & Sunday, August 7

Water Show starts at 9:15am

Air Show starts at 11:00am

Come visit the Milwaukee lakefront as the Air Force Thunderbirds, US Black Army Daggers, Navy Rhino F/A-18 East Demo Team (VFA-106), and the return of the 440<sup>th</sup> Air Refueling Wing fly overhead! Get there early with friends and family and enjoy the show!

Visit [www.milwaukeeairshow.com](http://www.milwaukeeairshow.com) for more information on the VIP seating section and parking.

### **Milwaukee County Zoo a la Carte is back!**

Come sample one or all of the 28 different restaurants that will be on tap for your dining pleasure at the 2011 Milwaukee Journal Sentinel Zoo a la Carte!

Runs **Thursday, August 18 through Sunday, August 21, 2011** with extended hours to 10:00pm on Friday and Saturday and 8:00pm on Sunday.

See the Milwaukee County Zoo's [website](#) for more information on entertainment and featured restaurants.

### **Cool Waters**

Cool Waters Family Aquatic Park is only open until Labor Day. Make sure you get your chance to take a plunge down the tube and body waterslides before the summer season ends.

Proper swimming attire is required.

Monday-Thursday 10:00am-8:00pm

Friday- Sunday 10:00am-6:00pm

(Weather Permitted)

2028 South 124<sup>th</sup> Street  
West Allis

Visit the Cool Waters [website](#) for more information on rates, gift certificates and more!

*Enjoy your  
summer and  
stay safe!*

